

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.
I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES L. BUCKLEY

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, today we celebrate the 100th birthday of a true hero of the U.S. Senate, former Senator James Buckley.

Born in 1923, James L. Buckley was raised in rural Connecticut. He went to college at Yale and graduated from Yale with a degree in English.

After enlisting in the Navy, he served in World War II, where he fought in battles of Leyte, Lingayen Gulf, and Okinawa. Senator Buckley was discharged in 1946 with the rank of lieutenant and received his law degree from Yale in 1949.

After working for a number of years in the private sector, James was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1970 as the candidate of New York's Conservative Party, becoming the only candidate in the history of that State to win a major party election, running against both a Republican and a Democrat. In fact, Senator Buckley was the first and only third-party candidate to be elected to the U.S. Senate in the 20th century.

During his tenure, he championed many conservative causes, but in particular, he was a pioneer in the early pro-life movement following the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* in 1973. Senator Buckley proposed and fought for a human life amendment, which would have recognized embryos as persons for purposes of that term's use in the 14th Amendment. Along with the late Senator Jesse Helms, Buckley was also a key player in passing the Hyde amendment, named after the late Henry Hyde, which prevents taxpayer dollars from funding elective abortions.

Challenging the orthodoxy of his day, Republican Senator Buckley, was also one of the Senate's first true environmental conservationists. "Nixon established the EPA in 1970," he said, but he added, "I actually proposed it during my '68 campaign." He is responsible for major revisions to the Clean Air Act, which passed in 1977.

James Buckley would later serve as an Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance in the Reagan administration in 1981, and then from 1982 to 1985, he served as president of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, which was a contributing force in defeating the Soviet Union in the Cold War. Buckley used radio to deliver raw, fact-based news and messages to millions stuck behind the Iron Curtain.

Then in 1985, President Reagan nominated Buckley to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. The Senate confirmed him. Once confirmed to this position, Buckley became the only American to have served in a major position in all three branches of the Federal Government—as a U.S. Senator, as Under Sec-

retary of State, and then as a judge sitting on the DC Circuit. He retired in 2000.

My own interactions with James Buckley have helped me understand why he remains a hero to this day, not just in the Senate but really throughout the United States. I invited him to address the Senate Republican conference at our steering lunch just a few years ago, in which he provided observations that were timely, relevant, compelling, and delivered with incredible enthusiasm.

On each occasion when I have met Senator Buckley, he has always struck me as someone who is friendly, who is kind, who is thoughtful, considerate, and deeply loves his country and is willing to work hard to make it a better place.

Today, Mr. Buckley is the oldest living former U.S. Senator, and to this day, he remains an advocate for constitutional government, for federalism, separation of powers, and for conservatism at large.

In his 2015 book, "Saving Congress from Itself: Emancipating the States & Empowering Their People," Mr. Buckley wrote:

Congress's current dysfunction is rooted in its assumption over the years of more responsibilities than it can handle. Its members now live a treadmill existence that no longer allows them time to study, learn, and think things through. Instead, they substitute political reflex for thought.

The Senate would serve America well by heeding Mr. Buckley's words.

James Buckley's commitment to service, whether on the battlefield, in these Halls of Congress, or in the courtroom, is a reminder of the power, joy, and honor of being an American.

On this his 100th birthday, the Senate recognizes and pays tribute to a former colleague, Senator James L. Buckley, and his important legacy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

FENTANYL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the overdose epidemic is ravaging communities all across this country and leaving a trail of death and destruction. The latest data shows we lost nearly 107,000 Americans last year alone. The majority of those deaths were attributed to fentanyl, a synthetic opioid made from precursors shipped from China, mainly, to Mexico, where they are then manufactured. Fentanyl alone is killing 70,000 Americans a year.

On average, we are talking about more than 190 people dying each day due to fentanyl. That is more people than a commercial 737 airliner can hold. So imagine the public outrage if, day after day, commercial airliners fell out of the sky, killing everyone aboard. Well, you can imagine what the reaction would be. Social media would erupt. People would protest. Our constituents wouldn't just ask us to intervene; they would demand it.

Unfortunately—and this is a mystery to me—the fentanyl epidemic and the

drug overdose deaths we have seen in the last year don't get the same sort of response. It is as though our threshold for outrage now is so high that even the death of 107,000 Americans would not achieve that threshold.

We know this epidemic does not discriminate. It kills people of all ages and backgrounds from major cities and small towns all across America. But one of the most alarming trends we see is the appalling trend of fentanyl-related deaths among teenagers. These teens frequently think they are buying something else, such as Percocet or OxyContin or Xanax, and unknowingly they end up with a counterfeit pill contaminated with a deadly dose of fentanyl.

This is the case for students in Hays County, which is just southwest of Austin, where I live. Since last summer, the Hays Consolidated Independent School District has lost five students to fentanyl poisoning.

In October, I had the chance to meet with the parents of one of those students, Shannon McConville, who lost her 17-year-old son Kevin to fentanyl poisoning. She told me that Kevin was full of promise, a talented person, an artist. After graduating, he wanted to join the Navy and become an underwater welder. But, sadly, Kevin was never able to realize his dream. He died just a few weeks before the beginning of his senior year.

A couple of weeks ago, I traveled to Hays County to speak with more families who have lost their children to fentanyl poisoning, as well as law enforcement personnel, school officials, and medical professionals, trying to figure out what do we need to do.

I saw Shannon and her husband Darren, as well as the parents of another young victim, 15-year-old Noah Rodriguez. Noah's parents, Brandon and Janel, told me that Noah was a genuine, kind young man and something of a jokester. He was an athlete, a devoted friend, and a big brother to his three siblings, the youngest of whom was only 2 weeks old when Noah died.

Despite their profound loss, these parents and countless others are committed to raising awareness. You can imagine the courage it takes to overcome your grief and pain to try to share your story with others so that others might live.

I had the opportunity to learn about the Fighting Fentanyl public awareness campaign in Hays County, as well as the work being done by school leaders and law enforcement. We all acknowledged that there is no single action that will end this epidemic. We can't just focus on prevention or treatment or drug diversion; a successful strategy will involve all three of those. We need buy-in from leaders at every level of government, as well as healthcare providers, schools, non-profits, law enforcement, and, of course, the general public, just like the approach we are seeing in Hays County. This has to be an all-in effort.

But during our discussion, there was broad agreement that the starting point should be the source of these drugs, which is our southern border. All four parents stressed the importance of securing the border and preventing fentanyl from ever reaching our communities.

Shannon McConville said that when it comes to the border, the Biden administration is failing. I agree.

Last week, five of my Republican colleagues joined me for a series of tours and meetings in the Rio Grande Valley, where they got to see the administration's security failures firsthand. By my calculation, that is about the 10th delegation that either I or Senator CRUZ or both of us have hosted of colleagues coming to the border in Texas.

Border Patrol agents told us last weekend about the tactics cartels use to traffic fentanyl and other dangerous drugs into the country. First and foremost, they distract and overwhelm agents by coordinating a surge of migrants, which provides a golden opportunity to sneak across the border undetected—overwhelm the Border Patrol with a swarm of migrants and distract them while the drugs make their way north.

This isn't news, of course, to the Biden administration. It is a well-known maneuver used by the cartels, acknowledged by the Attorney General of the United States last week when he came before the Senate Judiciary Committee. But for some reason, the administration seems determined to just simply look the other way.

President Biden's apathetic approach to the southern border must change in order for us to have a chance at addressing this public health crisis. Just think about a burst pipe in your home. If water is pouring from the ceiling, what do you do first? Well, you aren't going to go grab buckets and towels to start cleaning the water while it is still raining down; you are going to turn the main water supply off and stop the leak at its source. That is what we need to do here: Cut off the supply. Until that happens, we are going to be fighting a losing battle, and more people will die.

It is well known that the southern border is a major gateway for illegal drugs. In the last 12 months, Customs and Border Protection have seized 23,000 pounds of fentanyl at the southern border, enough to wipe out the entire U.S. population many times over.

That is a daunting statistic, but we know this number isn't the full story. It only includes the drugs that our law enforcement officials were able to stop. We know from all the deaths and wide availability of fentanyl and other illegal drugs in America that much more than that makes its way into the interior of our country. So there is no exact way to know how much fentanyl has slipped through the cracks, but the fact that we are losing 70,000 Americans a year to fentanyl is proof that we aren't batting a perfect game—far from it.

Let's not forget the fact that law enforcement at every level is also encountering and attempting to stop the fentanyl proliferation. Last month, the Collin County Sheriff's Office and North Texas Sheriff's Criminal Interdiction Unit arrested a Dallas man with about 6,000 fentanyl pills in his vehicle during a traffic stop. Last year, the Drug Enforcement Administration seized more than 379 million lethal doses of fentanyl—enough to kill every American.

Drug trafficking is obviously a lucrative business, and cartels take advantage of every security gap in order to make money. There is no question that the ongoing border crisis has provided the perfect opportunity for these cartels, who care nothing about people. All they care about is the money.

If Border Patrol agents are changing diapers and passing out meals, as they have had to do to manage the volume of migrants coming across the border, they can't control the frontlines and stop cartels from trafficking these dangerous drugs into the interior.

I want to be clear. I am not suggesting that every migrant who comes across is responsible for the drugs coming across the border—far from it. But the mass movement of people orchestrated by these transnational criminal organizations, even including people with legitimate asylum claims, opens the opportunity—gateways, if you will—for truly dangerous criminals and substances to come across the border. Unless something changes, it is going to get worse. In order to save lives, we have got to secure the border and stop fentanyl from reaching our communities. That should be the first step.

As a matter of fact, the President, in his State of the Union last month, said that he wanted Members of Congress to pass his plan to provide the officers and equipment needed to secure the border. Now, that surprised me because I wasn't aware that the President had a plan, but there is no question that border security legislation is needed and those resources are necessary.

We need to strengthen this combination of technology, boots on the ground, and infrastructure that Border Patrol tells me is the key to successfully securing the border, and that is the only way to stop dangerous drugs and criminals who mingle in with economic migrants and other asylum seekers to make their way across the border into the interior of the United States.

There is no doubt we also need to reform the asylum process to ensure that personnel, technology, and infrastructure can properly focus on interdicting narcotics and other contraband.

Anyone who questions the need for these measures should talk with the parents who have had to bury their children; talk with the brothers and sisters who have lost a sibling; talk with the teenagers who are grieving at the unexpected losses of healthy and vibrant friends. We owe it to them and

to the countless people who are terrified by this looming threat to stop these drugs at the source.

Obviously, what we are doing now is not sufficient. It is not working. I heard, again, Attorney General Garland say: Well, we are doing everything we can. And that is not true. He may think he is doing everything he can, but, obviously, it isn't working.

We can't accept failure. We have got to come up with a formula to address this as we did yesterday during an open hearing in the Intelligence Committee where I asked the leaders of our national security Agencies: What else can you offer? what other resources? What other authorities do you need in order to stop this dying of people who are taking fentanyl and other illegal drugs coming across the border?

But it starts with securing the border, and we will be fighting a continuing losing battle until that is done.

I yield the floor.

NOMINATION OF JAMES EDWARD SIMMONS, JR.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Judge James Simmons, Jr., who has been nominated to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California.

Born in Inglewood, CA, Judge Simmons received his B.A. from the University of California at Berkeley in 2001 and went on to earn his J.D. at Golden Gate University School of Law in 2004. Judge Simmons began his legal career as a deputy city attorney for the city of San Diego in 2005, a role in which he tried 19 jury trials on behalf of the city in 1 year. In 2006, he became a trial attorney at the San Diego District Attorney's Office. As an attorney in the gang prosecution unit, Judge Simmons tried 30 jury trials over 11 years. Since 2017, Judge Simmons has served as a Superior Court judge for the San Diego Superior Court. Having presided over thousands of matters and 12 bench trials, Judge Simmons has notably never been reversed by a reviewing court.

The American Bar Association has unanimously rated Judge Simmons "well qualified" to serve on the Southern District of California, and Senators FEINSTEIN and PADILLA strongly support his nomination as well.

I will be supporting this highly qualified nominee, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

NOMINATION OF DANIEL I. WERFEL

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, in a few minutes, the Senate will vote on Danny Werfel's nomination to be the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service.

Mr. Werfel told the Finance Committee that he will make his priorities those of delivering fairness and building trust.

We know that he is going to do just that because he has done it before. President Obama asked Mr. Werfel, during a very challenging time, to serve as Acting Commissioner in 2013.